

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

280.39
Ag 82
88.2

SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY
RECEIVED

MARCH 1971

DEC 29 1971

No. 86

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1971
PROCUREMENT SECTION
-- CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS --

It's Official! It's Spring! Research which contributes to an improved environment -- indoors and out -- is the framework for USDA's third annual Growing With America Festival. The event, scheduled for March 18 - 23 in Washington, D.C., is in observance of National Lawn and Garden Week, March 20 - 26, -- and Spring. Theme of the Festival, "Country Green for City Living," emphasizes agriculture's contributions to the quality of city life. Exhibits will feature plants for interior and exterior home and community landscaping, special lighting and maintenance techniques, soil-stabilizing plants and grasses, and trees developed especially to withstand the rigors of urban and suburban environments. Many of the plants and techniques are of the easy-to-do variety -- ways to have a green thumb without an aching back.

SCHOOL LUNCH GOES TO COLLEGE

For Testing, Tasting, and Researching. Some of the Nation's leading universities are testing, tasting, and researching to find new and more effective ways of improving nutrition for the Nation's children. The Food and Nutrition Service, which administers USDA's child nutrition programs, asked the universities to weigh and test the various operations of the school lunch program to see how well it is functioning as a delivery system for adequate child nutrition. So, under USDA contracts the universities are examining and evaluating -- thoroughly and scientifically -- every phase of the Federal-State-local National School Lunch and other child food service programs. Florida State University began a project in June 1969 focusing on the financial aspects of child nutrition programs. These include scrutinizing the feeding programs, facilities, personnel, nutrition education, administration and organization. In June 1970 Rutgers University undertook a 2-year research project aimed at improving the effectiveness of school feeding programs. At North Carolina State University a 1-year research project, started in July 1970, seeks the most effective ways of promoting the nutritional well-being of children in public schools. With the findings from these studies, food service professionals will be able to expand and improve the delivery, efficiency, and acceptability of child nutrition programs.



MECHANICAL TOMATO SORTER

For The Sort Of Tomatoes You Want. Color and uniformity of color are major factors in consumer acceptance of tomatoes, according to USDA researchers. Color is important, as well, to the grower in marketing his tomatoes: the reddest are marketed locally, the greenest are shipped as mature greens, and the rest are shipped as vine-ripened fruit. The present method of color sorting is by hand -- a costly proposition which involves such human factors as eye fatigue, deficient color memory, and irregular lighting. Often tomatoes sorted in packing houses must be re-sorted for color uniformity at the retail market. Recently, scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service studied the feasibility of sorting tomatoes mechanically. For their tests, the ARS researchers used a commercial photoelectric sorting machine, slightly modified with cushioning added to protect the fruit. Tomatoes were sorted into 4 and 5 color classifications at a rate of 420 per minute and into fairly uniform color groups. Besides reducing labor costs in the sorting operation, mechanical sorting of tomatoes can give the consumer the sort of tomatoes he wants.

URBAN FORESTRY RESEARCH

Help For City Trees. Without forsaking rural forestry research, scientists employed by USDA's Forest Service have begun to consider urban trees. There are 40 million trees growing along urban roads and streets and another 80 million around homes and in city parks and woodlands. Many of these trees are not suited to today's urban environment and are rapidly succumbing to insect and disease attacks, air pollution, or poor soil. A primary goal of this Forest Service research is to find trees that can survive the urban environment--either by developing new strains or by finding those that are hardy and resistant to insects and diseases. Another goal is to discover ways to maintain conditions in urban areas that will allow tree growth. A leaflet, "Trees Need Your Help, Too," explains how the results of these studies can be applied. Single copies of the leaflet are available free from the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082.

TOMORROW'S AMERICA

It Can Start With Painting Mailboxes. In Bowling Green, Kentucky, a better tomorrow started when the community painted mailboxes together. The spirit grew to produce highways, libraries, medical centers, more than 36,000 nonfarm jobs, and much more within the 10-county Barren River Area Development District. And the quality of life in rural Bowling Green, and in surrounding towns of Glasgow, Russellville, Morgantown, Franklin, Cave City, and others, has improved at the same pace as industrial jobs, providing an ideal combination to encourage young people to stay home. The area's community spirit and determination used Federal and State programs -- including assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its rural development committees -- to create opportunities for themselves and their children. Bowling Green found its key to a better tomorrow in the mail box. Has your community found its key to the future? "Tomorrow's America," a new USDA filmstrip and slide set, tells how people in the Barren River Area Development District did it. Copies of the filmstrip can be purchased for \$6.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. Order the slide set for \$12.00 from Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Narration with music is available from either source for \$2.25 as a cassette or \$2.00 as a 33 1/3 record.

NEW GREENS ON THE HORIZON

Imported From Ethiopia. A new green vegetable, a near relative of collard and mustard greens, may one day be served on American tables. The plant, called brassica carinata, was imported from Ethiopia where it is grown in small fields near villages. Test vegetables were grown in 1968 and 1969 and evaluated by food technologists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. In taste tests, persons who like the flavor of mustard and collard greens enjoyed the brassica carinata. They said the leaf stems and tender stalks detracted somewhat from the appearance, but not the flavor, of the canned product. The frozen product was much more attractive because the leaves, stems, and stalks were chopped and thoroughly mixed. USDA chemists say the new green vegetable is a good protein source. So, pass the brassica carinata, please.

REMINDER TO TRAVELERS

"Pestina" Symbolizes Agricultural Quarantines. USDA's friendly bug girl, "Pestina," alerts travelers to the hazards of destructive plant pests and diseases. As a quarantine symbol, she appeals to travelers to cooperate with agricultural quarantines and regulations affecting international, interstate, and intrastate movement of items that could spread pests. Several State governments now use "Pestina" to further agricultural quarantine programs. But ultimately, it's the public's responsibility to stop pest contamination of the U.S. environment. Pests of overseas origin pose a significant problem. Last year, more than 230 million persons entered or reentered the United States by land, sea, and air. Plant Quarantine Division inspectors from USDA's Agricultural Research Service intercepted some 46 thousand pests of quarantine significance at major U.S. ports of entry. One pest, the Mediterranean fruit fly, was intercepted more than 400 times. This pest had become established four times in the past 14 years -- in Florida and Texas -- at an eradication cost of some \$21 million. Heed "Pestina's" message to "help stop the spread of plant pests."



SAFETY FIRST

Flame-Retardant Cottons. As spring nears, homeowners often shut off central heating and rely on the family- or living-room fireplace for warmth on chilly evenings. The open hearth evokes cheer and a pleasant nostalgia, but it can pose a serious threat to youngsters who play too near to the open flames. Scientists in USDA's Agricultural Research Service Eastern Marketing and Nutrition Division have helped reduce the likelihood of such burns. In response to appeals from Congress and safety experts, ARS scientists developed chemical treatments that make cotton flame retardant. The treatments are so effective that in the presence of flame or extremely high heat the fabric will char--but will not burst into flame. The carbon char retains the fabric shape to protect the body. The treatments last through repeated launderings for the life of the fabric. Children's sleepers treated with this life-saving process are available commercially, nation-wide. The treatments are also valuable for use on draperies, rugs, and wall-coverings in nursing homes, and on protective clothing for people who work near open flames.

NOTICE

About The Food Preview. The Spring Food Preview, usually a feature of the March issue of SERVICE, will appear in the April SERVICE. The delay is to take advantage of information presented at the annual Outlook Conference of USDA economists, food and nutrition specialists, commodity experts, and other leaders in these fields. The 1971 Outlook Conference was held in Washington, D.C., in late February, concluding after the deadline for SERVICE copy.

RUB-A-DUB-DUB

There May Be Bacteria In The Tub. Grandmother really had blue washdays what with boiling and stirring the laundry over a hot fire. Fortunate granddaughter, with her automatic washing machine and clothes dryer, can breeze through washday. But grandmother's rugged laundry ritual had an advantage over modern conveniences: The boiling effectively killed most bacteria in her laundry. A study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, found that "neither the water temperature nor the detergents used under today's home laundering conditions can be relied on to reduce the number of bacteria in fabrics to a safe level." The study was made in response to some homemakers who became aware of the spread of bacteria by clothing and textiles when their families developed stubborn infections. The infections spread from one person to another. Microbiologists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service searched for a practical way to improve sanitation of home laundering. They found that four types of disinfectants met requirements suitable for use as laundry sanitizers: quaternary disinfectants, liquid chlorine disinfectants, pine oil disinfectants and phenolic disinfectants. A USDA bulletin, "Sanitation in Home Laundering" (H&G 97) gives tips on using the disinfectants as well as some other hints on sanitizing the home laundry -- easily, inexpensively, and safely. Copies of the bulletin are available for 5 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

MARCH PLENTIFUL FOODS

Nuts That Are Not Nuts. Peanuts -- standouts in any crowd -- are featured on the Plentiful Foods List for March. Served as snacks or mixed up in a dish -- from soup to dessert -- peanuts add rich flavor, crunchy texture, and protein to any menu. And although peanuts may be mixed up -- they are not nuts. They are members in good standing of the legume family, along with peas and beans. An especially appropriate time to serve peanuts is during National Peanut Week, March 3 - 13. Other items on the March Plentiful Foods List are citrus fruits and juices, which share top billing with peanuts, potatoes, prunes, canned peaches, pork and eggs. Plentifuls for April will include canned peaches, eggs, ripe olives, potatoes, prunes, pork, turkeys, flounder and sole fillets, dried peas, peanuts and peanut products, and canned applesauce.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your zipcode.